

imprints

The Newsletter of Literacy BC

A Meeting with the Minister

A Message from Linda Mitchell, Executive Director, Literacy BC

On May 3, Paul Gallagher, President of Literacy BC, and I met with the new Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT), the Honourable Graeme Bowbrick.

We took this opportunity to familiarize Mr. Bowbrick with the literacy field in B.C. and to discuss with him a number of the issues and challenges that the field encounters. In particular we urged Mr. Bowbrick to become the leader within government by addressing these issues at the inter-ministerial level. We encouraged him to work collaboratively with the many ministries who have a real stake in the future of learning opportunities in B.C., since the effectiveness of literacy learning has a direct impact on many ministerial portfolios.

We thanked the Minister for the new initiatives his ministry has implemented for adult learners in B.C., specifically increased access to literacy/ABE programming. However, we pointed out that MAETT has not augmented its investment in the Adult

Literacy Cost-Shared Program for several years. We also pointed out that many other provinces and territories have provided significant increases since the inception of the federal/provincial cost shared program. We urged the Minister to increase his ministry's financial commitment to it in BC.

You Won't Want to Miss This ...

Setting the Agenda for Tomorrow

*Literacy BC will host a major provincial conference in Vancouver
November 30 - December 2, 2000.*

*It will be an occasion for celebration, reflection and renewal, and an opportunity to help set the **agenda for literacy** for the next decade in BC. Registration brochures will be mailed in August and posted on the Literacy BC website. **Mark your calendars now and plan to attend.***

***Your participation is essential!**
For more information please contact Literacy BC.*

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Valuing Literacy in Canada ...

B.C. Research Circle

Valuing Literacy in Canada is a joint initiative of the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

\$2.5 million over five years has been allocated to fund applied research in the field of adult literacy in Canada.

Grants are made to research projects that are collaborative and multidisciplinary — the projects must include a significant collaboration between academics and literacy organizations or practitioners. The initiative will create new knowledge in adult literacy theory, practice and policy; get new people involved; and help to make literacy research a vocation in Canada.

Dr. Tom Nesbit of Simon Fraser University, in partnership with Literacy BC, received approval for a one year grant through the *Valuing Literacy in Canada* joint initiative. His role as principal investigator is to establish and develop a practitioner-based literacy research circle in B.C.

Fifteen literacy practitioners have been selected to participate in this unique project which began last month.

Outcomes from the project will include:

- developing the research capacity of literacy practitioners
- encouraging and assisting cooperation between university researchers and practitioners
- improving the dissemination and application of research results
- stimulating research in key areas of inquiry
- encouraging the training of practitioner researchers
- stimulating collaboration among researchers from different disciplines

For more information, contact Tom Nesbit at SFU, Centre for Labour Studies, Phone (604) 291-4177 or email tomnesbit@sfu.ca.

Information on the *Valuing Literacy in Canada* program is available on the SSHRC website at www.sshrc.ca or the NLS website at www.nald.ca/nls/htm.

e-northwest

Regional Electronic Networking

e-northwest is a unique collaboration among the four western provinces, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

e-northwest will:

- provide the literacy fields in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nunavut and the NWT with pilot electronic conferencing services
- offer these pilot projects access to existing information, expertise, and technical resources in Alberta and B.C.
- build a collaborative, cooperative electronic network among the western provinces and the territories that develops shared conferencing through electronic gateways
- provide a model for future development of a national

electronic conferencing infrastructure and effective, long-range strategic planning at the national level.

To find out more about **e-northwest**, contact: Sandy Middleton, Literacy BC Information and Communications Coordinator
SMiddleton@TheHub.bc.ca.

The partners in the **e-northwest project** are: Alberta Association for Adult Literacy, Coalition for Brandon Community Services, Literacy BC, Nunavut Literacy Council, NWT Literacy Council, and Saskatchewan Literacy Network,

e-northwest is funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada.

Health Help by Phone

The Ministry of Health has a new service helpful for people who have low literacy skills or visual impairments.

They have developed a series of 120 Recorded Health Files that can be heard over the telephone to give callers information on public and environmental health issues. The Health Files are a series of short, easy to understand fact sheets developed by the Ministry over the last decade and are widely used by public and preventive health workers throughout the province. They provide information about many childhood and adult diseases, food safety, environmental hazards, problems with pests, and other health matters. The recordings are clear and easy to understand.

Here is a sample of just some of the topics callers can listen to: dental care, E-coli, food safety, outdoor health risks, pregnancy, nutrition, vaccinations, and water disinfection.

To listen to the recorded Health Files.

Call 1-877-660-2628 toll-free or 660-2628, in Greater Vancouver or visit
www.health.gov.bc.ca/hlthfile.



Two BC Programs win Awards

Family, Workplace Programs in B.C. Honoured

The Delta School District... has won a Conference Board of Canada award for its Book p.a.l.s. family literacy program.

The Conference Board **National Partners in Education** awards recognize partnerships between business and education. The school district won the award in partnership with the Delta Credit Union for the 1999-2000 **Broad Community Collaboration** category, sponsored by Human Resources Development Canada.

The district hosted a reception on May 8 at the School Board office to celebrate its success and honour its community partners.

The Book p.a.l.s. (partnerships for the advancement of literacy skills) intervention program provides direct support and resources to needy families and at-risk children with the support of a host of community partners, including the Delta Credit Union, the Rotary Clubs of Ladner and North Delta, Hellings Elementary School, and McDonald's Restaurants. Through the program, parents and their kindergarten children attend Saturday morning activity sessions held at the elementary school that encourage an awareness of literacy and learning.

The partnership has also worked to promote community awareness of the importance of literacy by holding parent forums, publishing articles on the importance of reading, organizing a community-wide Recycle for Literacy event, distributing thousands of used children's books, and supporting Family Literacy Day.

The Learning Centre (TLC) at Cominco Ltd. in Trail... is the winner of the Conference Board of Canada's 1999-2000 **Award for Excellence in Workplace Literacy**. The Award, sponsored by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada, recognizes and rewards innovative and effective workplace literacy programs.

Cominco Ltd. is Canada's oldest continually operating mining company. In 1996, it opened an employee-driven, on-site learning centre which delivers courses, conducts workshops and designs learning paths for its 1800 Trail employees. TLC, the local school district and Selkirk College work together to design programs that match the training and work histories of the employees.

Update on Regional Coordination...

Christina Patterson, Regional Literacy Coordinator for Malaspina and North Island regions stepped down from her position March 2000 for personal reasons.

Literacy BC would like to take this opportunity to thank **Christina** for her dedication and exemplary work in the literacy field in B.C. Christina has made a tremendous difference in the lives of the students, practitioners,

volunteers and others who have had the good fortune of calling her a friend, colleague, and mentor. The important contribution you made, Christina, as Regional Literacy Coordinator is invaluable to us, and to everyone with whom you have come in contact. Your friends here at Literacy BC, and on Vancouver Island, are deeply grateful. Best wishes for the journey ahead.

*We would like to extend a hearty welcome to **Judy Brooks**, the new Regional Literacy Coordinator for Malaspina and North Island. Judy is the Volunteer and Family Literacy Coordinator for C.A.L.L.S., the community literacy group serving Courtney/Comox.*

Judy has more than 20 years experience in literacy-related fields and comes to us with extensive knowledge and ideas for literacy development in her region. Great to have you with us Judy.

You can contact Judy at:

C.A.L.L.S. Adult Learning Centre

917 Fitzgerald Avenue

Courtenay, BC V9N 2R6

Phone: (250) 338-9906

Fax: (250) 338-9974

Email: brooksj@island.net

Goodbye and thank-you to Linda Cooney

Linda Cooney has left her position as Community Liaison for the Adult Literacy Cost-shared Program at the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT).

Audrey Thomas, Education Officer, Developmental Programs at MAETT, says Linda has been a valuable and stabilizing influence for the cost-shared program through much change within the Ministry.

She has been a very valuable colleague and her services will be missed.

Update on Family Literacy Developments

THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

The National Children's Alliance is a group of more than 30 national organizations committed to the well being of children, youth and families. The Alliance is cross-sectoral and represents hundreds of thousands of people who work with children and their families, including those who work in many different settings as staff and volunteers. The Alliance is not an organization, but acts as a collective voice at the federal level on policy issues, where there is common interest.

The work of the Alliance is done primarily by volunteers working on committees. The main area of focus for the past three years has been to work with federal officials and politicians towards the development and implementation of a **National Children's Agenda**.

The Alliance has accessed funding to:

- host a national **think tank** to address policy issues
- conduct **regional forums** to encourage broader dialogue on a National Children's Agenda

The purpose of these forums is to provide an opportunity for provincial/territorial organizations with an interest in children, youth and families to give input into the development and implementation of the National Children's Agenda. It is hoped that forum participants will share the results of the Forum discussions with government representatives at all levels in order to move the National Children's Agenda forward. Jean Rasmussen, Literacy BC Projects Manager, attended the BC Forum, hosted by the BC Association for Family Resource Programs in Vancouver on May 29th.

A report of the outcomes from the regional forums will be published and used by the National Children's Alliance at the federal level to make the National Children's Agenda a reality. It is crucial that leaders and organizations across Canada find ways to collaboratively make a difference during this window of opportunity.

For more information on the Alliance and the NCA contact Jean at Literacy BC.

The Alliance web-site is www.cfc-cfc.ca/nca.

THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S AGENDA

In the Speech from the Throne the federal government indicated its willingness to move forward on a National Children's Agenda. The Prime Minister challenged provincial and territorial governments to come together to forge an agreement on early childhood services by December of this year. This announcement, plus the substantial anticipated surplus at the federal level, provides a six-month window of opportunity to influence government at all levels to make the early childhood development portion of the Agenda a reality. An agreement on early childhood services would provide the first step towards the implementation of a National Children's Agenda to serve children and youth of all ages.



Family Literacy

Family Literacy Program Funding Available

Notice from the Columbia Basin Trust

Family literacy programs in B.C. may be eligible to apply for funding from The Columbia Basin Trust Resources for Family Literacy Program. The Canadian Mental Health Association for the East Kootenays is the Administrative Agent for this funding program.

The Resources for Family Literacy Program will provide funds to help participants in **existing** family literacy programs overcome barriers to their successful participation. Existing family literacy programs are those which are in place and were active during the previous twelve months.

Who Can Apply for Funding?

Any existing family literacy program, group or organization inside the Columbia Basin Trust's boundaries may apply for the Resources for Family Literacy Program funding. **For an explanation of these boundaries, please contact Don Ellison (see below).** To apply, you must either be a non-profit society or be sponsored by a non-profit society. You are encouraged to partner with other groups or organizations. All applications which meet the basic qualifications will receive funding.

The deadline for applications is July 14, 2000.

Contact:
Don Ellison
Resources for Family Literacy Programs
Columbia Basin Trust & CMHA-EK
Box 339
Rossland, BC V0G 1Y0
Phone: (250) 362-5533
Fax: (250) 362-7631.
e-mail: highland@netidea.com

Field-testers wanted!

This spring, about 10 programs from around BC have been field-testing some tools to assess non-academic outcomes in fundamental literacy classes.

We are looking for more people to perform field-testing for this coming fall. We require field-testers from all parts of the province, in all settings who will work with any number of learners. We will ask you to describe in some detail how the process went and the kind of information both you and your students were able to discover.

For more information, please contact **Evelyn Battell** at:

Malaspina University College
222 Cowichan Way
Duncan, BC V9L 6P4
Phone: (250) 746-3500
Fax: (250) 746-3529
battelle@mala.bc.ca

Update on ...our Resource Library

Attention Library Users...

No Mailing Costs for Literacy BC Library Patrons!

Borrowing resources from our Resource Centre is now simpler and more cost-effective. Through an arrangement with Canada Post, Literacy BC has been granted a library book rate that greatly reduces mailing costs and means that our library patrons

no longer have to pay to return materials.

On-loan resources will be mailed to you in nylon zippered book bags with a window designed to hold a double-sided mailing label. One side of the label is your address and the other Literacy

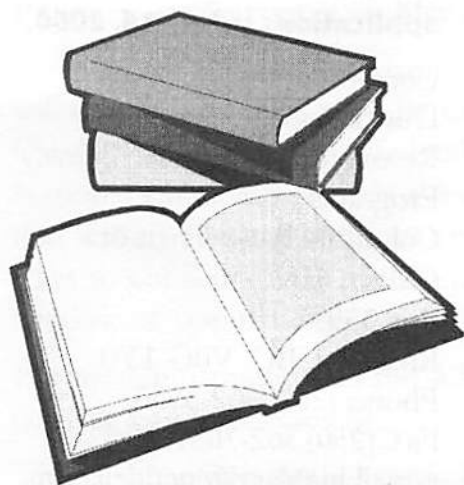
BC's address. **You do not have to prepare a return label or packaging, or pay for the costs of return mail.** All you need to do is use the return label provided with your package. The post office recognizes this label and exempts you from postage.

Reminder

The library at Literacy BC offers a unique and diverse collection of over 3000 catalogued literacy-related resources. Most are print materials, but resources are available in other mediums such as video, CD-ROM, audio-cassette, kits, and games.

On request, we can search the collection for a list of our holdings in a particular subject area and generate a bibliography of titles for you. Here are some examples of subject areas in our collection.

- aboriginal literacy
- adult basic education
- clear language
- computers and literacy
- family literacy
- learning disabilities
- literacy and health
- literacy programming
- prison literacy
- program development
- seniors literacy
- tutoring
- women's literacy
- workplace literacy



Look what's New

Resources

Resources

on our shelves...

PRACTITIONER RESOURCES

Critical Literacy: Empowering Students with Cognitive Disabilities.

**Marilyn Raymond,
Okanagan University
College. 1999.**

As critical literacy "aims to challenge the culture of silence by helping students to find their voice," the guide's purpose is to provide instructors with strategies to help students with cognitive disabilities develop a critical voice along with more traditional reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

In her introduction, Raymond says, "*Over the years I have looked for, and attempted to develop, better and more appropriate materials, strategies and methods. I want my literacy classes to open doors for students. Doors to creativity, self-expression and freedom of mind.*"

The guide includes teaching and learning strategies such as phonemic awareness, phonics, grammar and spelling, as well as theme units on self-awareness, family, gaining independence and community living.

Guidelines for Inclusive Curriculum.

Developed by Marg Penney, Seema Ahluwalia, Betty Nobel, Alan Tremayne, and Inga Thomson. 1996.

This manual is an outline for a workshop on the concept of inclusive curriculum, or "the emotionally loaded issues of sexism, racism and discrimination as they impact on the classroom." The workshops were developed with input from persons with disabilities, visible minorities and Aboriginal people, and field-tested at several B.C. community colleges. The manual contains a discussion of some of the key issues and some suggested activities and exercises.

Best Program Practices, Saskatchewan Literacy Network. A self-evaluation kit for adult literacy programs and related literacy projects. March, 2000.

A working committee of literacy practitioners, program coordinators, and learner representatives across the province developed these statements of best practice and the accompanying questionnaires. The kit, used as a Best Practices foundation for literacy in Saskatchewan, will help programs reflect on current initiatives and identify their strengths. The booklet is well formatted with clearly designed and easy-to-read questionnaires for programs, tutors and learners.

Novels for Adult Learners — Activities Handbook for Instructors.

Prepared by Don Sawyer, Okanagan University College, 1999.

This is an accompaniment to the *Novels for Adult Learners* Series, published in 1997, which was designed to meet a need in the field for interesting and relatively easy to read original fiction relevant to the lives of adult literacy students. The handbook is a response to requests from instructors for ideas on how to use these popular novels in the classroom. The emphasis is on a range of activities, specific to the content of the books, that are enjoyable, relevant and affirming and that help turn the classroom into a place of critical inquiry.

If you would like a more comprehensive listing of what's new on our shelves, contact May Chan at Literacy BC: Phone: 1-800-663-1293 or E-mail: MChan@TheHub.capcollege.bc.ca

Look what's New

Resources on our shelves...

PRACTITIONER RESOURCES (cont'd)

Working with the North West Company.

Consumer's Association of Canada (CAC), 1999.

This interesting report documents the work by the CAC to adapt its popular resource, *Food Tips* — eight pages of food and nutrition information in clear language — for a different audience, the Aboriginal people of northern Canada. The CAC partnered with The North West Company, a retail store with 155 outlets in northern communities, to adapt the information compiled in the original *Food Tips* for residents of the north with low literacy skills.

To revise the original *Food Tips*, CAC's Literacy Advisory Group was expanded to include two nutritionists and other health professionals who work with Northern residents. This report documents their feedback. They recommended, for instance, revising the artwork to depict aboriginal habits, customs and settings, and rewriting the text to reflect Aboriginal views on health and diet. The report includes both the original and revised *Food Tips* to show the effect of these changes. The revised *Food Tips* are available by contacting the CAC office at (613) 238-2533 or via their website at www.consumer.ca

Measuring Learning Readiness. A Resource Guide for Students and LBS (Literacy and Basic Skills) Practitioners.

Pat Powell, Coordinator, Peterborough Native Learning Program, Fall 1999.

This manual is designed to look at learners' abilities beyond academics. It is intended for use as part of a student assessment and training plan, hand in hand with an academic skills profile. This binder of resource materials and exercises addresses topics such as the importance of nurturing the spiritual realm, motivation and goal setting, strengths, interests and abilities, learning styles, communicating, attendance, attitude, and assertiveness.

Career Planning Guide for Adult Learners

Calvin Coish, College of the North Atlantic, Newfoundland. 1999.

This guide provides a comprehensive, step-by-step look at planning a career. Each step is followed up with a story or interview that illustrates the planning process. Questions for discussion and reflection accompany the story. Lots of self-reflective, evaluative questions are posed to help the reader determine what he/she wants to do. Sample application forms, resumes and cover letters are included.

Learning to be the Boss.

Ida Stanley-Tober, Calgary John Howard Society. 1999.

This guide outlines in plain language what to consider in setting up a business, such as the skills and aptitudes required for being your own boss, ideas for new businesses, integrating the business into lifestyle, and the kinds of professional help needed for support, legalities, finances, marketing and promotion.

Look what's New

Resources

Resources

on our shelves...

PRACTITIONER RESOURCES (cont'd)

**Volunteer Leadership Training Manual:
Leading, Coaching, Tutoring.**
YMCA, Edmonton. 1998.

Designed as a framework for the development, assessment, and evaluation of core competencies for effective tutoring, the manual contains building blocks to design and deliver a competency-based training program and evaluate volunteer skills. It outlines objectives, desired competencies and evaluation measurements, to train and support volunteers in a way that reflects regional differences, community resources, and individual participant needs.

LEARNERS' STORIES

**A Brutal Way of Learning -
Does it have to be?**

By Dan Haley and Jane Davidson. Preface by Kathy Neill, Executive Director, Literacy Ontario Central South

The following is excerpted from the press release from the publishers of this book:

"In this newly released book, adult learner and recovering alcoholic Dan joins with journalist Jane Davidson to show the huge obstacles that low-literate adults in Canada face in their daily lives. With Haley's compelling life story and Davidson's relentless analysis of the issues, the two show that literacy costs everyone.

You can borrow our copy from Literacy BC or order from:

Davidson Communications,
183 Algonquin Boulevard,
Peterborough, Ontario,
K9H 6N1.

Phone: 705-749-2095.

Fax: 705-749-2908.

E-mail: seejanerun@home.net

Web: www.seejanerun.net

Price is \$19.95 plus shipping/handling and applicable tax.

LITERACY AND HEALTH

What the HEALTH!

A Literacy and Health Resource for Youth.

Canadian Public Health Association, National Literacy and Health Program. 2000.

Developed for use by health providers, youth workers and literacy practitioners, *What the HEALTH!* contains stories, discussion questions, and information on topics such as safe sex, self-esteem, drug abuse, drinking, smoking, prejudice, safe environments, homelessness and healthy eating.

The book can be used by people who teach, guide and support young people in a wide range of environments — literacy programs, schools, youth agencies, community services and health care settings. It is designed as a guide for youth to explore their attitudes and experiences, exchange ideas, and increase their knowledge. Through stories, questions, exercises, and health information, all written in clear language, the book works as a tool to help young people, whatever their literacy skill level, make decisions about important choices affecting their health. If you work with youth and care about their health, this resource has something to offer you.



Donor Appreciation

To those who have contributed up to \$100:

Carla Bullinger
Suzanna Francis
Paul Gallagher
David Griffiths

Joan Jamieson
Jan Seedhouse
Elizabeth Thompson
Erika Webster

Employees of B.C. Hydro (The Hydrecs Fund)
Delta Credit Union

Desktop publishing provided by



We get letters... *A message from Gordon Campbell*

In 1991, as Mayor of Vancouver, Gordon Campbell established the PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy BC. Since that time, as leader of the Official Opposition he has continued to be a strong supporter. Recently, we received the following letter...

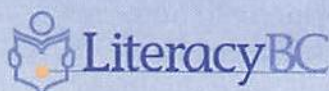
It is a privilege and an honour to support the work of Literacy BC. I can't think of life skills more basic and essential than reading and writing. Literacy is the cornerstone of an economically independent and healthy life. Moreover, it unlocks the door to a world of ideas, invites us to places where anything is possible, makes our hearts soar and nourishes our spirit. The ability to understand and complete a job application, the simple pleasure of spending an afternoon lost in a good book or the ability to read to your child — all of these things are critical.

Learning is a lifelong journey. In an increasingly complex world, it is more important than ever to ensure that British Columbians are equipped with the tools they need to attain the greatest possible quality of life. According to recent studies, more than 40% of working age British Columbians have difficulty with reading, writing or basic arithmetic. This is a shocking statistic and, in a modern and enlightened society, we simply have to do better.

By increasing access to services in local communities and by creating public awareness, Literacy BC helps thousands of British Columbians every year. I am proud to support your ongoing efforts.

We are supported by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology; Human Resources Development Canada—The National Literacy Secretariat; memberships and donations. Donations to Literacy BC are tax deductible.
Federal Charities Number: 12846-0334-RR0001

- Supporting Learners
- Providing Consultation, Referral, and Resources
- Raising Public Awareness
- Coordinating Regional Literacy Networks
- Providing Training and Professional Development
- Influencing Public Policy
- Building Partnerships



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Vancouver BC V6B 1L8
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Toll free in BC: 1-800-663-1293
Facsimile: (604) 684-8520

e-mail: literacy_bc@douglas.bc.ca
Internet: www.nald.ca/lbc.htm

Literacy Awareness is Growing

The following article by John McCormick has been reprinted from the May edition of *Literacy at Work* with permission from ABC CANADA.

When ABC CANADA commissioned the polling experts at DECIMA RESEARCH to conduct the first ever opinion poll of literacy in Canada in late 1989, there were two primary considerations. The first was to measure public awareness of the issue. The other, collateral interest was to establish a baseline by which to measure the long-term impact of ABC CANADA's efforts to heighten awareness of the cause.

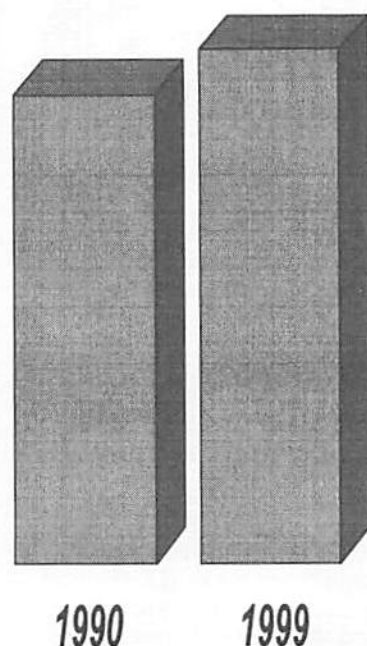
Fast forward to the latest DECIMA survey of literacy in the fall of 1999. What was at stake was nothing short of measuring whether the literacy community had been able to raise the tide of awareness about the importance of reading and writing in a significant way since the issue first showed up on the radar screen of public opinion 10 years earlier.

For Christine Featherstone, executive director at ABC CANADA, the survey was important for several reasons, the least of which being simply a question of comparing numbers. "Literacy awareness is central to the development of a strong support for adult reading and writing programs. If the public continues to recognize that basic reading and writing skills are essential to the ability to function and contribute, then we are able to keep raising support and dollars for literacy programs for adult learners."

Thanks to the support of the National Literacy Secretariat, DECIMA found that the effort and activity of literacy groups, government, business and the media has significantly raised awareness in Canada about the importance of reading and writing skills. Good news for ABC CANADA, and a boost for all who have laboured in support of the cause.

The survey used a standard cross-section approach: DECIMA contacted

Importance of basic skills such as reading, writing and math compared to 10 - 20 years ago

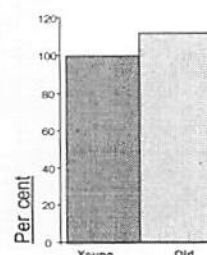


In 1999, 69% of Canadians felt that "basic literacy skills are more important today than 10 - 20 years ago," compared to 63% in 1990.

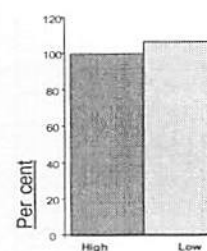
This finding can be reported in a number of different ways:

- a six percent point increase;
- a 13% overall increase;
- 1.7 million more Canadians feel...

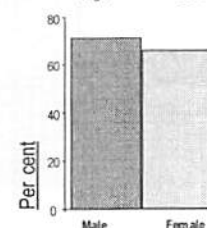
Those who agree most with the statement: "basic literacy skills are more important today than 10 - 20 years ago".



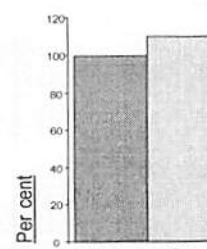
More young people
12% more people in the youngest age bracket (18 to 24) than the oldest age bracket (65) agreed.



More poor people
7% more people in the lowest income bracket (under \$20K) than in the highest income bracket (\$70K) agreed.



More men
72% of men vs. 65% of women agreed. This 7% gap did not exist at all in 1993.



More outside Atlantic Canada
11% more people than the national average in Atlantic Canada, the country's most economically depressed region, agreed.

1,500 people — a number which ensures 95 percent certainty of the results — to ask about their thoughts on:

- the importance of literacy compared to 10 - 2 years ago;
- awareness of literacy in Canada;
- limited literacy as a problem; and
- inadequate reading and writing skills in the workplace.

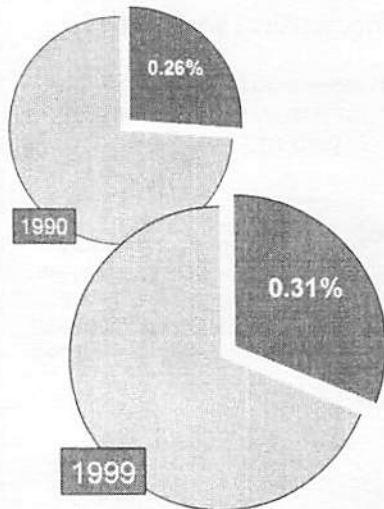
While all areas showed considerable

increases in public recognition of literacy over a 10-year period, the most dramatic rise occurred in the area of describing limited literacy skills as a problem. Based on the polled results, 25 percent of Canadians now believe that literacy is "a very serious problem." That represents some 1.5 million more Canadians than back in 1990.

Literacy in the workplace was also

Literacy Awareness (cont'd)

Awareness of literacy in Canada



In 1999, 31% of Canadians said they had heard "a lot" about the issue of literacy in Canada, compared to 26% in 1990.

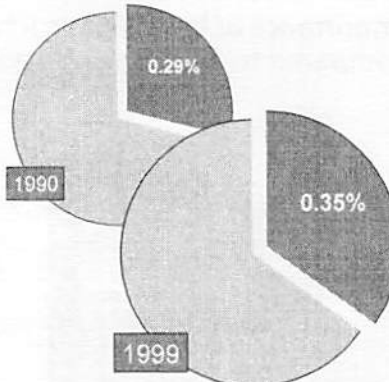
This finding can be reported as:

- a five percent point increase;
- a 23% overall increase;
- 1.25 million more Canadians said...

Detailed comparison findings show:

- 46% more young adults (18 - 24) have heard "a lot" about literacy;
- 13% more older persons (+65) than younger persons (18 - 24) have heard "a lot" about literacy;
- 36% fewer people said that they have heard "nothing at all" about literacy since the 1993 survey;
- 12% of people with the least amount of formal education (some or less than high school) said that they have heard "nothing at all" about literacy issues.

Describing literacy as a problem



In 1999, 35% of Canadians said that the issue of literacy was "a very serious problem," compared to 29% in 1990.

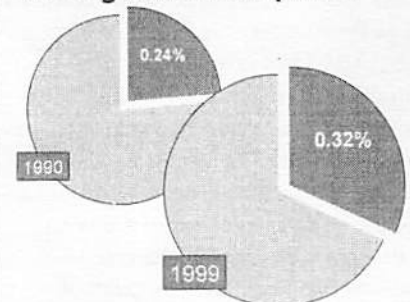
This finding can be reported as:

- a six percent point increase;
- a 25% overall increase;
- 1.5 million more Canadians said...

Detailed comparison findings show:

- 20% more people in the lowest income bracket (under \$20K) than those in the highest income bracket (\$70K) felt that literacy is "a very serious problem";
- those with the lowest income (under \$20K) and with the least formal education (some or less than high school) are the most aware that low literacy levels pose serious problems, yet they report hearing the least about literacy issues;
- older persons (65+) were much more likely than younger persons (18 - 24) to respond that they did not know where to look for help in the Yellow Pages™;
- unemployed people were nearly 10% more likely than employed people to respond that they did not know where to look for help with basic literacy skills.

How much of a problem is inadequate reading and writing in the workplace?

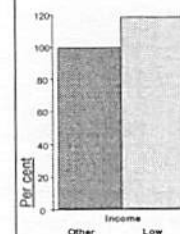


In 1999, 32% of Canadians felt that inadequate reading and writing skills are "a very serious problem in the workplace," compared to 24% in 1990.

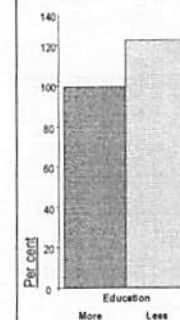
This finding can be reported as:

- an eight percent point increase;
- a 37% overall increase;
- 1.8 million more Canadians said...

Detailed comparison findings show:



20% more people in the lowest income bracket (under \$20K) felt that inadequate reading and writing skills are "a very serious problem in the workplace."



24% more people with the least formal education (some or less than high school) than those with the highest level of education (university) felt that inadequate literacy skills are "a very serious problem in the workplace."

seen as a problem. As computerization of the workplace continues, the issue is not simply that people need to have high workplace literacy skills. Rather, it will be essential to make literacy training easily accessible and acceptable — or risk being left in the wake of technological change.

Featherstone hopes that as awareness of the issue increases, more people

will seek out programs to improve their literacy skills. "In the past, if a person had difficulty with reading and writing, they were likely to feel ashamed and disinclined to join a literacy program. There was a stigma attached to illiteracy. But as recognition of the cause increases, it takes literacy out of the closet and makes it much more acceptable for people to be open about their need for improved

reading and writing skills."

Still there is work to be done. As Featherstone says, "although there has been an increase in awareness, few Canadians will spontaneously identify literacy as the social or economic issue that most concerns them." Until that happens, there are bound to be reasons why we are unable to completely address the underlying causes.